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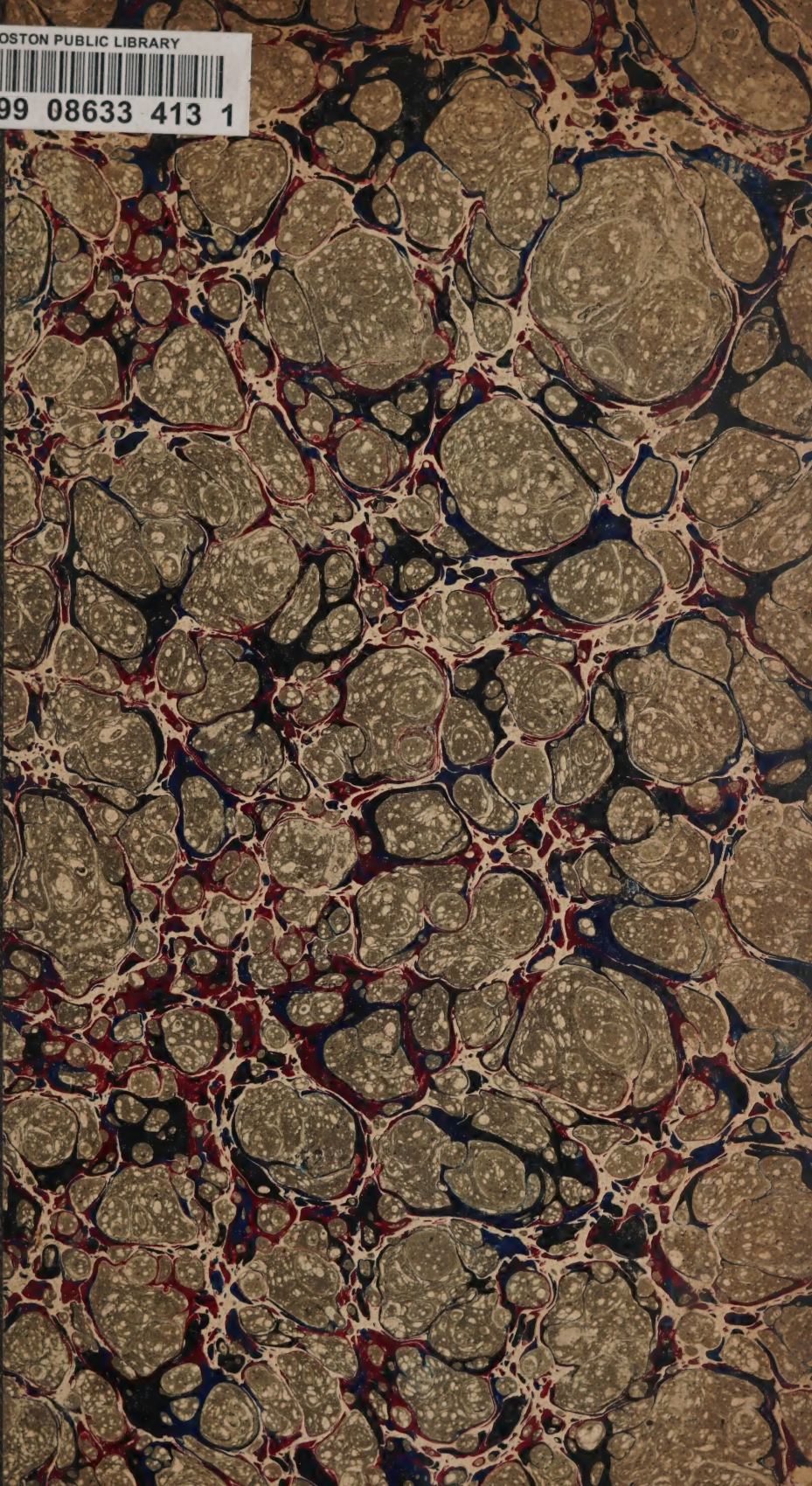

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MANUAL

OF THE

Boston Provident Association.

ADOPTED MARCH 13, 1890.

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BOSTON:

PRINTED BY NATHAN SAWYER & SON,

No. 70 STATE STREET.

1890.

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THE BOSTON PROVIDENT ASSOCIATION.

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BOSTON:
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No. 70 State Street.
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(24261)
Dr. Francis H. Brown.
Feb. 18/91

ACT OF INCORPORATION.

[*Statutes of* 1854, *Chapter* 362.]

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE BOSTON PROVIDENT ASSOCIATION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECT. 1. — Ephraim Peabody, F. E. Parker, J. D. W. Joy, their associates and successors, are hereby made a Corporation, by the name of the Boston Provident Association, for the purpose of suppressing street-beggary, and of elevating and improving the condition of the poor; with all the powers and privileges, and subject to all the duties, liabilities, and restrictions, set forth in the forty-fourth chapter of the Revised Statutes.

SECT. 2. — Said Corporation may hold real and personal estate not exceeding in amount the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, to be exclusively devoted to the purpose above named.

[See Statutes of 1869, Chapter 325.]

Approved by the Governor April 24, 1854.

BY-LAWS

OF

THE BOSTON PROVIDENT ASSOCIATION.

ADOPTED MARCH 13, 1890.

Article I. — *Members.*

Every person who was a member of the Association on the 30th of September, 1889; or who is or has been an officer of the Association, or a member of its Board of Managers; or who has heretofore contributed to its funds the sum of fifty dollars or upwards at any one time; or who may be elected, at any legal meeting of the Corporation, a member thereof, — shall be a member of the Boston Provident Association; and no other persons shall be members thereof.

Article II. — *Officers.*

The officers of the Association, under the name of a Board of Managers, shall consist of a President, five Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, an Auditor, a Secretary, and not less than twelve or more than thirty-three other Managers. They shall be chosen at the Annual Meeting, and shall hold office for one year and until others shall be chosen in their stead. Five members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Article III. — *President.*

The President, or in his absence the senior Vice-President present, shall preside at all meetings of the Corporation and of the Board of Managers. In the absence of the President and Vice-Presidents, a Chairman shall be chosen by the meeting.

Article IV. — *Treasurer.*

The Treasurer shall give bonds with sureties, to be approved by the Board of Managers, or their Committee appointed for

the purpose, in such sum as the Board may from time to time determine, for the faithful discharge of his duties. He shall receive and have custody of all moneys, bonds, notes, deeds, and other securities belonging to the Association, which he shall keep, disburse, and manage, under the direction and control of the Board of Managers, or of their Committee appointed for the purpose. He shall enter in the books of the Association an account of its financial transactions, and render a summary of the same, and of the funds and property in his keeping, at the Annual Meeting and when called upon by the Board of managers.

Article V. — *Auditor.*

The Auditor shall examine the books and accounts of the Treasurer, subject to the direction of the Board of Managers, or of their committee appointed for the purpose. He shall also examine, subject to like direction, the accounts of all persons disbursing the funds of the Corporation. On the presentation of the Treasurer's Annual Report, he shall audit the same.

Article VI. — *Secretary.*

The Secretary shall give notice of all meetings of the Association and of the Board of Managers, shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of the Association and of the Board of Managers, and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned him by the Board of Managers.

Article VII. — *Board of Managers.*

The Board of Managers shall have control of the funds of the Association. They shall have authority to make all needful rules and regulations; to fill any vacancies that may occur in the Board of Managers; to appoint and remove all officers or agents not chosen by the Association; to fix the compensation and salaries of all officers and agents; to appoint committees from their own body, and to delegate their powers, in whole or in part, to such committees; and, generally, to adopt any measures not inconsistent with the charter and By-Laws of the Association. Their stated meetings shall be held at such time as the Board may deem expedient. Officers of the Association and members of the Board of Managers may be removed by a vote of two-thirds of all the members of the Board.

Article VIII. — *Meetings.*

The Annual Meeting of the Association shall be held on the fourth Wednesday in October, at such time and place as may be fixed by the Board of Managers, unless the Association has itself fixed the time and place.

At the Annual Meeting the Board of Managers shall submit a report of their proceedings during the year. Special meetings of the Association shall be called by the Secretary at the request of the President, or whenever requested in writing to do so by ten members of the Association.

Three days' notice shall be given, in two or more newspapers printed in Boston, of the Annual Meeting, and of all other meetings of the Association, whether special or adjourned; but meetings may be adjourned from day to day without such notice.

Article IX. — *General Agent.*

There shall be a General Agent, who shall be elected annually by the Board of Managers at their meeting held next after the Annual Meeting, to hold office for one year and until a successor is chosen.

It shall be his duty, under the direction of the Board of Managers, to keep an office where members of the Association, and others, may confer on matters connected with the work of the Association; to inform and advise Committees, Visitors, and others; to receive reports of Agents of the Association, and make suitable records thereof; to investigate particular cases that may be referred to him; to prepare and distribute tickets for the use of contributors and others; to receive and deliver clothing, bedding, and such articles as may be contributed; to perform all other duties properly devolving upon a General Agent; and to make a report of his doings to the Board of Managers at their stated meetings. It shall be in the power of the Board of Managers to appoint such assistant officers or agents as shall, in their judgment, be necessary for the more convenient despatch of business, at such salaries and for such terms as they may deem expedient.

Article X. — *Duties of Members.*

It shall be the duty of the members of the Association to endeavor, in all suitable ways, to give practical effect to its principles, and especially to discountenance indiscriminate almsgiving and street-begging; to provide themselves with tickets of

reference; and instead of giving aid to unknown applicants, whose cases they cannot themselves investigate, to refer such applications to the Visitor, if any, of the Section of the city in which the applicants reside, or to the Central Office, in order that their claims may be properly investigated, and that they may, if deserving, be relieved.

All contributors to the funds of the Association for any year shall be entitled to refer applications, as above, during the year for which their contributions were made.

Article XI. — *Amendments.*

These By-Laws may be amended at the Annual Meeting, or at any special meeting of the Association, by a vote of three-fourths of the members present; notice having been given, in the call for the meeting, that amendments will be acted upon.

RULES

OF

THE BOARD OF MANAGERS.

ESTABLISHED MARCH 13, 1890.

MEETINGS.

1. — Stated meetings of the Board shall be held at such time and place as it may determine. The President, with the consent of the Executive Committee, may postpone any meeting. Special meetings shall be called by the Secretary at the request of the President or of five members of the Board. In the absence or neglect of the Secretary, the President may call a meeting. Two days' notice must be given of the time of meeting.

DISTRICTS.

2. — The city shall be divided into eleven Districts, as at present constituted, until otherwise ordered by the Board. Three members of the Board shall be assigned to each District as its Committee at the first meeting of the Managers after the Annual Meeting.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

3. — At the first meeting of the Board after the Annual Meeting, an Executive Committee of five members shall be appointed, whose duty it shall be to examine all bills against the Association; and no drafts, orders, or bills shall be paid by the General Treasurer — except the accounts of the District Treasurers — unless first approved by this Committee or by a vote of the Board.

4. — The Executive Committee shall examine the accounts of the District Treasurers whenever reported to them by the Auditor; and they shall authorize the Auditor to draw upon the General Treasurer for the amount due, or refer the accounts to the Board of Managers. They shall examine the books and accounts of the Treasurer, and report upon the same at such

time as they may deem proper. They shall have general supervision of the Central Office, and shall fix the salary of the General Agent and his assistants, subject, however, to the control of the Board of Managers.

Finance Committee.

5.—A Finance Committee of three members shall be appointed at the first meeting of the Board after the Annual Meeting. No investments or changes of investment shall be made by the Treasurer, except with the approval of the Finance Committee; and it shall be the duty of the Finance Committee to propose to the Board of Managers ways and means for obtaining funds to carry on the work of the Association.

District Committees.

1. — It shall be the duty of the several District Committees to divide their districts into such Sections as may be convenient, and to obtain a suitable Visitor for each Section.

2. — They shall, at their first meeting after the Annual Meeting, appoint from their number in each District their Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer.

3. — In the sickness or absence of Visitors, if their Sections have not been otherwise provided for, the District Committee shall supply substitutes, either from their own number or in such way as they may deem desirable, and report to the Central Office. They shall also report when the Visitors resume duty.

4. — When there is a vacancy among the Visitors by resignation or otherwise, the District Committee shall fill it as soon as practicable, and in the meantime proceed as in section 3.

5. — They shall make arrangements with one or more wood and coal dealers and with one or more respectable grocers in their respective Districts, and shall instruct all their Visitors to draw orders only on the persons thus selected for such supplies as may be needed for distribution.

6. — They shall, on the first Monday in every month from September to May, inclusive, either convene the Visitors in their respective Districts for the purpose of receiving their returns, or collect the same and transmit them to the General Agent on or before the Thursday following.

7. — They may afford relief in the illness or absence of a Visitor and in such other cases as they may deem expedient; and they shall make the same returns, and be subject to the same rules, so far as applicable, as are prescribed for Visitors.

8. — They shall keep a strict account of all disbursements in their respective Districts, and shall render it to the Auditor at least two days previous to each stated meeting of the Board of Managers. The Auditor, if he approve the same, shall then draw on the Treasurer for the amount.

Sectional Visitors.

1. — It shall be the duty of the Sectional Visitors to confine their labors exclusively to the particular Sections assigned them, so that no individual shall receive relief, excepting in the Section where he is known and to which he belongs.

2. — They shall carefully investigate all cases referred to them before granting relief; ascertain the condition, habits of life, and means of subsistence of each applicant; and shall extend to all such kind services, counsel, and assistance as a discriminating and judicious regard for their present and permanent welfare requires. And, in cases of sickness and want, it will be their duty to inquire whether there is any medical or other attendance, and what assistance is needed; to provide themselves with information respecting the dispensary physician; and to draw from the resources of this Association, not money, which is never allowed to be given except with the consent of the District Committee or a member thereof, but such articles of fuel, clothing, and similar supplies as the necessities of the case require.

3. — They will endeavor to ascertain whether the applicant has a claim upon any religious society or any special charity; and, if so, to present the case to such society or charity, so that this Association may, if proper, be released from the further care of it; also ascertain what sources of relief, if any, the applicant is drawing upon, and whether these are not sufficient to meet the wants of the case.

4. — In all cases of want coming to the knowledge of the Visitors in their respective Sections, they will be expected to perform the same duties, although no application has been made.

5. — It shall be their duty, moreover, to render a report of their labors, whether they have aided any cases or not, and also an account of their disbursements, to their respective Committees, on the first Monday of every month from September to May, inclusive. No Visitor neglecting these duties will be entitled to draw on the funds of the Association.

6. — They shall provide themselves with a book, which will be furnished at the Central Office, in which to record the names and residences of the persons they visit, and the relief afforded them, together with such particulars and facts of each case as may convey a thorough knowledge of it, and be useful in preparing their reports. On ceasing to be Visitors, they shall give immediate notice to the Secretary of their District, and transfer to him or to the Central Office their books and papers, with such information as may be useful to their successors.

7. — When, from sickness, absence, or any other cause, they are unable to attend to their Sections, and have not provided a substitute, they shall immediately report to the Secretary of their District and to the Central Office, in order that their Sections may be cared for until they are able to resume their duties.

8. — They shall draw for supplies only on such places as they are authorized to draw upon by their respective District Committees. The Association will not be accountable for the amount of any orders drawn upon any other source.

9. — In all cases of impostors, or persons undeserving relief, in their respective Sections, the Visitors will make an immediate and separate report of each case to the General Agent, that it may be placed on record at the Central Office.

10. — Visitors, when requested by members to report to them upon any case, will do so at the earliest possible moment, as members are frequently willing and desirous to aid applicants if they can be assured of their worthiness.

Amendments.

These Rules may be amended at any meeting of the Board of Managers by a vote of two-thirds of the members present, or by a majority vote when a majority of the Board is present.

DIRECTIONS TO VISITORS.

Charitable societies, except such as are designed for an especial object, are instituted for the purpose of extending temporary aid in a time of necessity, — relief in sickness and suffering, and assistance to those who would endeavor to help themselves. They were never intended to be the sole means of support to whole families or to individuals, nor to aid the wilfully vicious and indolent. Their object is not by almsgiving to encourage beggary, which so often ends in pauperism; but, by judicious and discriminate relief in a time of need, to save families from the degradation of the poorhouse, or of sending out their children to beg from door to door.

This Association is based upon these principles. Its further objects are, to endeavor to improve the condition of the poor by seasonable advice and by frequent intercourse with them; to suppress street beggary; and, as far as is possible, to place all unfortunate and dependent poor persons among the beneficiaries of such special charities as are designed for them, or under the care of those more favored than themselves.

It should be the aim of the Visitor, in the first place, to ascertain whether the story as told by the applicant be true; and having, as far as possible, got at the facts and the peculiar conditions of the case, and satisfied himself in regard to its needs, he must endeavor to aid it in the best and most judicious manner, either by giving an order on the spot for coal, groceries, or clothing, or by referring it to the General Agent of the Provident Association.

The following directions are recommended to all Visitors as a guide to enable them more readily to carry out the views of the Association: —

1. Provide yourself with a book, which will be furnished at the Central Office, in which to record the names and residences of the persons you visit, the relief afforded them, and full particulars of each case. Upon ceasing to be a Visitor, return the book to the office, that it may be handed to your successor.

2. Give immediate attention to every application; and regard each applicant for relief as deserving charity, until a careful examination proves the contrary.

3. Withhold all relief from unknown persons; and always visit those for whom your benevolent services are required, before granting relief.

4. Grant no relief out of your Section, but refer the case to the proper Visitor.

5. Give necessary articles in proportion to immediate need. Give what is least susceptible of abuse.

Give assistance at the right moment, *and not prolong it beyond the duration of the necessity which calls for it;* but extend, restrict, and modify it according to that necessity.

6. Require of each beneficiary abstinence from intoxicating liquors as a drink; of such as have children of a proper age, that they be kept at school, except unavoidable circumstances prevent; and that those of a suitable age be apprenticed to some trade, or sent to service, or in other ways provided with respectable, self-supporting employment: the design being to make the poor a party to their own improvement and elevation, *and wilful violation or disregard of these rules should debar them from relief.*

7. Require lone persons, able to labor, who are keeping house, and are wholly or partly dependent on charity for support, to give up their rooms and go to service. In many cases it may be well for active women, with one or two children that may be boarded out, to follow the same course.

8. Give no relief to recent emigrants or bonded passengers, except in urgent cases, for two or three days, or until they can be placed under the charge of the Superintendent of Alien Passengers.

9. Give no permanent aid to persons who are likely to be permanently dependent; also discontinue relieving all who manifest a purpose to depend on alms rather than on their own exertions for support, and whose further maintenance would be incompatible with their good and with the objects of the Association.

10. You may sometimes be asked to pay rent. Let it, however, be distinctly understood that the Association cannot furnish means to pay back-rent or debts of any kind, though in a

case of sickness it may pay a week or two's rent in advance, to save a family from being ejected from their rooms. In such case, or in any other where money is required to be given, consult the General Agent.

11. As a general principle, alms should, as far as possible, be withheld from the drunkard. The inebriate's family may, indeed, be in actual want of the necessaries of life; but still the rule is, *that relief should never be given to the families of the intemperate beyond the demands of urgent necessity.*

12. Make particular inquiry as to the circumstances of relatives of applicants for relief; for it is obvious that *alms should never be so given as to supersede the duties of such relatives as are able to provide for them.* Also, when applicants are members of churches, or have claims on special charities, the Visitor should present every such case to such church or charity, in order that this Association may be relieved of the care of it.

13. Never take squalidness as an evidence of want, or neatness as an evidence of plenty.

14. As there are some cases which the public good requires to be removed by the authorities to the public institutions, these should be reported to the police, who, by order, are required to aid the Visitors of this Association in the performance of their duties.

15. In all cases of impostors or of persons undeserving relief in your Section, make a separate and immediate report of each case to the General Agent, that it may be placed on record at the Central Office.

16. Ascertain whether the applicant is not receiving help from other sources, — from individuals or other societies, — and regulate the relief accordingly.

17. When clothing, bedding, or furniture is needed, draw an order on the General Agent for such articles as are required; and, if on hand, they will be delivered on such order.

18. In drawing orders for coal or groceries, be sure to draw only on those persons with whom your District Committee have made arrangements to furnish supplies.

19. Visitors should seldom, if ever, afford encouragement that relief will be continued. Let it be understood, in all proper cases, that the present relief is all the recipient is sure of.

This measure is deemed necessary as an incentive to action and exertion on the part of those relieved. Care should be taken that our alms are not misapplied, and that they do not afford encouragement for beggary, or offer an inducement for the indolent and shiftless to remain among us.

20. In all cases of difficulty consult the General Agent.

21. In making your reports, be careful to put the full names of both heads of families, whether living or dead; the number of the street or place; and the other particulars required by the printed forms.

22. In case of your sickness or temporary absence, report immediately to the General Agent, in order that your Section may be cared for; and, on resuming your duties, report the fact to him.

23. When members of the Association request you to report upon any case they send you, be prompt in so doing, as they often wish to afford relief to cases that come under their notice, if they can only be assured of their deserving assistance. You will thus not only save the funds of the Association, but interest many who desire to do good, and who will frequently take the entire charge of certain poor families.

24. Draw all orders on the blanks of the Association, which can always be obtained at the Central Office.

25. Be particular to have your Monthly Report sent in on the first of each month, except in summer (May to September, inclusive), when it may be sent on the 25th of September.

26. Application for relief should be made at the Central Office by the *male head* of the family, when there *is* one; and, as a rule, aid to be withheld until he shall have presented himself.

27. Keep up communication with the police of your Sections; the unworthy and the vicious, finding that you are acquainted with them, will be wary in trying to impose upon you.

28. Keep up the self-reliance of applicants by encouraging and urging them to help themselves.

29. As a large proportion of their destitution is the result of improvidence, a little hardship will often prove a salutary lesson, and stimulate them to effort. Better *that* than, by a too ready almsgiving, make paupers of them.

(Nov., 1891, 20,000)

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